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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#)
SUBJECT: ALN DEPUTIES DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY OF QUICK, EASY
REUNIFICATION WITH PLC

REF: A. MANAGUA 2625
[1](#)B. MANAGUA 2546

Classified By: Ambassador Paul Trivelli for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: During a recent meeting with the Ambassador, a group of young Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN) deputies-elect minimized rumors of ALN rapprochement with the rival Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC). They commented that public overtures from PLC officials aim to create the impression that the ALN will not continue as a separate entity. The deputies admitted that the ALN made mistakes and must work to train party poll watchers and convince rural voters that the ALN represents the future of Liberalism in Nicaragua before municipal elections in 2008. They agreed with the Ambassador that ALN officials must work hard to maintain the Alliance and resist Sandinista Front (FSLN) attempts to undermine Nicaraguan democracy. Senior ALN deputy Maria Eugenia Sequeira later commented that the new deputies are well-intentioned, but lack experience. She agreed with her cohorts, however, that the ALN should maintain its independence and work to undermine the PLC. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador and poloff met with ALN deputies-elect Ramiro Silva, Wilber Lopez, Francisco Jarquin, and Francisco Valdivia (alternate) on December 13 to discuss the November elections and ALN consolidation strategies. The deputies-elect thanked Ambassador Trivelli for his support during the campaign and put themselves "at our disposal" for future legislative activities in the National Assembly.

What About Liberal Unity?

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[1](#)3. (C) The deputies commented that many PLC supporters are disenchanted with the party, and the time may be ripe to "pick the low hanging fruit" and strengthen the ALN. Valdivia said that many Liberals voted for the PLC out of fear -- believing the PLC propaganda that only the PLC could defeat the FSLN -- and now feel angry and deceived. In contrast, virtually no ALN voters believe they made the wrong choice; however, Valdivia explained, the PLC is already maneuvering to entice the best Liberal candidates for the 2008 municipal elections, regardless of party affiliation.

[1](#)4. (C) Silva stated that many comments from PLC officials regarding unification with the ALN are directed at weakening the Alliance by creating the impression that the ALN has no future as an independent party. He agreed that the ALN should try to attract PLC officials and supporters, but said

that the ALN must work on internal unity first. Jarquin warned that supporters of convicted ex-President and PLC leader Arnoldo Aleman may try to infiltrate the ALN during this process.

15. (C) The deputies concurred with the Ambassador that the ALN must maintain its Alliance with its constituent parties and movements -- such as the Conservative Party, the Resistance, evangelical Christians and others -- as well as work with regional parties and civil society to protect Nicaraguan democracy. Jarquin agreed that a separation of the individual groups could lead to chaos, although Lopez was confident that Montealegre (who he was confident would lead the ALN caucus in the Assembly) could hold the ALN together.

Pact Stole Seats From Us

16. (C) Jarquin responded to a query from the Ambassador on the outcome of the national elections by stating that the Supreme Electoral Council's extreme delay in posting the results from the final eight percent of voting centers and refusal to post results by voting center was very suspicious. The deputies-elect believe that the FSLN and PLC conspired to manipulate the results in close races, which resulted in ALN losses in Chinandega, Masaya, and Managua. (Note: The ALN leadership ultimately decided not to pursue challenges in these races -- see ref B. End Note.)

Deputies Admit ALN "Deficiencies"

17. (C) While they stated that partisan influence in the electoral authorities prejudiced the ALN, the deputies also admitted that the ALN made mistakes during the campaign. Silva acknowledged that the ALN failed to penetrate rural areas in the north and other areas where the PLC ultimately carried large majorities. Valdivia agreed that the corps of ALN poll watchers was "deficient" compared to their more experienced FSLN and PLC counterparts. Lopez stated that ALN presidential candidate Eduardo Montealegre failed to shake his image as a candidate of the elite class in many areas.

18. (C) To rectify these weaknesses, the deputies agreed that the ALN needs a much stronger radio presence in rural areas. PLC partisans dominate local radio in the north and often refuse to run ads or commentary from competing parties, Valdivia explained. He also noticed that the PLC was very successful in particularly remote areas of the South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS) where he did not have the resources to campaign. Silva concurred with us that local mayors are also important opinion-makers and should be courted.

Help Us -- New Deputies Lack Experience

19. (C) During a December 14 meeting with poloff, senior ALN deputy and caucus chief Maria Eugenia Sequeira commented that the new, young deputies are "well-intentioned, but inexperienced." She used the occasion to again request training and technical assistance for caucus members. She also implied that we should continue to meet with more seasoned ALN politicians, such as herself, as our primary contacts with the party -- not the "newbies."

110. (C) Sequeira agreed with the deputies-elect that the ALN must be very cautious regarding any sort of rapprochement with the PLC. She discounted the possibility that non-Arnoldista deputies may join the ALN caucus, but said they may form a separate caucus or independent voting bloc within the PLC. Sequeira specifically mentioned former National Assembly president Carlos Noguera (re-elected in Jinotega) and "ten others" who may respond to overtures from the ALN and/or the Embassy. In the longer term, however, she stated that the ALN must "completely destroy" the PLC, which is too riddled with corruption for salvation.

Comment

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¶11. (C) With the Liberal electorate feeling betrayed by the PLC's false promises, the time is ripe for the ALN to make inroads, especially in northern rural areas that the PLC dominated. To accomplish this task, Montealegre must strengthen the cohesion of the party and motivate his ground troops and newly-elected ALN officials who will soon begin to enjoy the cushy salaries and perks of office. While the ALN rose from nothing to become a major force in the National Assembly, the 2008 municipal elections will likely determine which party represents the future of Liberalism in Nicaragua and which will become a footnote in history.

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